

EXHIBIT 20

1
2 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

3 ----- X

4 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF
COLORED PEOPLE,

5 SPRING VALLEY BRANCH, et al.,
6 Plaintiffs,

7 vs.

No.

7:17-cv-08943

8
9 EAST RAMAPO CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT, et al.,
10 Defendants.

----- X

11
12 February 8, 2018

13 1:53 p.m.

14
15
16 Deposition of JEAN E. FIELDS,
17 held at the offices of Morgan, Lewis &
18 Bockius LLP, 101 Park Avenue, New York,
19 New York, pursuant to Notice, before
20 Theresa Tramondo, AOS, CLR, a Notary
21 Public of the State of New York.

22
23 Reported by:

24 THERESA TRAMONDO, AOS, CLR

25 JOB NO. PA2808169B

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BY THE COURT REPORTER:

Q. Please state your full name for the record.

A. Jean E. Fields, J-E-A-N, F-I-E-L-D-S.

Q. What is your address?

A. Home, 3 Deer Run Road, Pomona, New York 10970.

J E A N E F I E L D S, called as a witness, having been duly sworn by a Notary Public, was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY

MR. LEVINE:

Q. We are on the record. Good afternoon. My name is Randall Levine. I'm an attorney for the East Ramapo Central School District.

Could you please state your full name for the record.

A. Jean E. Fields.

Q. Thank you, Ms. Fields.

Do you understand you're here today to give testimony in a case called

1 Fields

2 I wasn't on the campaign.

3 Q. In the second sentence of
4 paragraph 26 you say, "During that time, I
5 witnessed a shift in the tenor of these
6 board meetings as the board became hostile
7 and unwelcoming to members of the public
8 school community who attended." Do you see
9 that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. When you use the phrase "public
12 school community" in paragraph 26, what do
13 you mean by that?

14 A. The parents of the public school
15 students.

16 Q. Is there anybody else besides
17 the parents of the public school students
18 who would be members of the public school
19 community?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Who else would you say -- I'm
22 only asking for your understanding. Who
23 else would you say counts as a member of the
24 public school community?

25 A. I think anyone who advocates for

1 Fields

2 public school education.

3 Q. So it is not necessary to be the
4 parent of a public school student to be a
5 member of the public school community; is
6 that right?

7 A. That's true.

8 Q. Is your understanding of the
9 public school community in any way limited
10 by a person's race?

11 A. No.

12 Q. So White people can be members
13 of the public school community?

14 A. Why, of course.

15 Q. And Latino people can be members
16 of the public school community?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And Black people can be members
19 of the public school community?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And Jewish people can be members
22 of the public school community?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Is there anybody who can't be a
25 member of the public school community?

1 Fields

2 A. I guess anybody who does not
3 advocate for public school.

4 Q. What do you mean by "advocate
5 for public school"?

6 A. That is committed to a strong
7 public school education.

8 Q. Is that like a -- is what you're
9 describing a policy preference in favor of
10 public school programs; is that a fair way
11 to describe it?

12 A. I don't know.

13 Q. I'm just trying to understand
14 what you mean by "advocate for public
15 schools." So anybody who has a particular
16 preference for strong or well-funded public
17 schools; is there a policy angle to it?

18 A. I don't know of a policy, but
19 anyone who believes and advocates for public
20 school education would be that community,
21 even if they don't have kids in public
22 school.

23 Q. What specifically might somebody
24 who advocates for the public school in your
25 understanding, what specifically might they

1 Fields

2 be advocating for?

3 A. Fabulous education, strong
4 programs, just the best that a kid can get
5 in the public school.

6 Q. Would an advocate for public
7 schools advocate for better funding of
8 public schools?

9 MR. JASON: Objection.

10 A. I think it advocates for the
11 best education that a students can obtain in
12 a public school, whatever that means; I
13 mean, whatever avenues.

14 Q. Turning back to paragraph 26,
15 you say that you "witnessed a shift in the
16 tenor of these board meetings as the board
17 became hostile and unwelcoming to members of
18 the public school community who attended."
19 If the board is hostile to the members of
20 the public school community, what community
21 is the board from?

22 A. Majority of the private school
23 community.

24 Q. I'm just asking for your
25 understanding. What do you mean when you

1 Fields

2 say "private school community"?

3 A. Any student in school who is not
4 attending public school of school age.

5 Q. That would be private school
6 students, right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Is the private school community
9 limited to private school students
10 themselves?

11 A. I think just that the public
12 school community is limited to those persons
13 who advocate for public school. I think it
14 would be the same for private school.

15 Q. So the private school community
16 in your understanding is made up of people
17 who advocate for private schools?

18 A. Private education, yes.

19 Q. What sort of things would
20 someone who advocates for private education
21 advocate for specifically?

22 MR. JASON: Objection.

23 A. Not sending their child to a
24 public school.

25 Q. Anything else?

1 Fields

2 A. Not that I know of.

3 Q. When you say that you "witnessed
4 a shift of the tenor of these board
5 meetings," when between 2003 and 2013 did
6 you witness that shift?

7 A. Particularly, I would say,
8 around 2005. There was a public school
9 trustee on the board of education who was a
10 holocaust survivor and she advocated
11 strongly for strong programs. She just
12 loved students, loved kids, and she lost her
13 seat on that board.

14 Q. Do you remember her name?

15 A. Yes, I do.

16 Q. What was her name?

17 A. Georgine Hyde, H-Y-D-E.

18 Q. You witnessed a shift in the
19 tenor in 2005 with Ms. Hyde's departure from
20 the board. Did anything else happen in 2005
21 that contributed to your sense that the
22 tenor had changed?

23 A. Not that I can recall.

24 Q. Do you recall who else was on
25 the school board at the time in 2005?

1 Fields

2 we could not go and talk to them. If you
3 met them outside and they said, hi, you
4 could you say hi to them, but while they
5 were in school, you could not.

6 Q. I understand.

7 What about outside of school?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Why not?

10 A. Because we don't live in the
11 same areas.

12 Q. Turn to the same page, bottom of
13 the page, page 8, please, paragraph 28. So
14 folks can read along, I'll read it. "The
15 board's attentiveness and responsiveness to
16 the public school community began to decline
17 around 2005 when candidates backed by
18 organizations and leaders favoring lower
19 taxes and maintaining a high level of
20 district services for private school
21 students gained a majority of seats on the
22 board." Do you see that paragraph?

23 A. Yes, I do.

24 Q. As you sit here today, do you
25 believe that paragraph is accurate?

1 Fields

2 A. Yes, I do.

3 Q. When you say "organizations and
4 the leaders favoring lower taxes and
5 maintaining a high level of district
6 services for private school students," what
7 organizations are you referring to?

8 A. White organizations that lived
9 in the Monsey, New Square, Kaser
10 neighborhoods.

11 Q. Do you mean organizations from
12 the Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR. JASON: Objection.

15 Q. By "organizations" in the
16 context of paragraph 28, are you referring
17 to organizations from the Orthodox and
18 Hasidic Jewish communities?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. When you say "leaders" in the
21 context of that paragraph, who do you mean?

22 A. The same thing.

23 Q. So by "leaders" in paragraph 28,
24 you mean leaders from the Orthodox and
25 Hasidic Jewish communities?

1 Fields

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. How do you know, if you know,
4 that those organizations and leaders favored
5 lower taxes?

6 MR. JASON: Objection.

7 A. Because I've been to board
8 meetings where they stood up and basically
9 said on behalf of their communities that
10 they wanted lower taxes.

11 Q. Do you know whether they were
12 referring to property taxes?

13 A. I imagine so, yes.

14 Q. How do you know that they
15 favored maintaining a high level of district
16 services for private school students?

17 A. They also said that.

18 Q. Other than people from the
19 Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities
20 speaking at board meetings, have you ever
21 heard anyone else from the Orthodox and
22 Hasidic Jewish communities express that they
23 favor lower taxes?

24 A. No. But I might add that the
25 person who spoke indicated that he spoke on

1 Fields

2 behalf of the organization. He belonged to
3 an organization.

4 Q. Do you recall the name of the
5 organization?

6 A. No, I don't.

7 Q. Did you ever form an
8 understanding of why the Orthodox and
9 Hasidic Jewish communities favored lower
10 taxes?

11 MR. JASON: Objection.

12 A. No.

13 Q. Did you ever hear anyone say why
14 this particular organization from the
15 Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities
16 favored lower taxes?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Do you have an understanding of
19 your own?

20 A. No.

21 Q. In the same paragraph when you
22 say "maintaining a high level of district
23 services for private school students," what
24 specifically are you talking about there?

25 A. Whatever services the private

1 Fields

2 schools get from the district.

3 Q. Such as?

4 A. Mandated services,
5 transportation and books. That's all that
6 comes to mind.

7 Q. When you say "mandated
8 services," what services are mandated?

9 A. "Mandated service" is a term
10 that refers to special education students
11 and any service that they're required.

12 Q. It's only for special education
13 students, though?

14 A. Mandated services only applies
15 to special ed.

16 Q. In paragraph 28 you say that
17 "candidates backed by organizations that
18 favor lower taxes and maintaining a high
19 level of district services for private
20 school students gained a majority of seats
21 on the board." So by that, do you mean that
22 in the 2005 election a majority of the board
23 of education were members of the Orthodox
24 and Hasidic Jewish community?

25 A. I don't know that. I don't

1 Fields

2 remember that, if it was 2005.

3 Q. But it was around 2005, right?

4 A. Yes.

5 MR. JASON: Objection.

6 Q. In your mind is there anything
7 wrong with members of the Orthodox and
8 Hasidic Jewish community favoring lower
9 taxes?

10 A. Absolutely not. I'd like lower
11 taxes too.

12 Q. In your mind is there anything
13 wrong with members of the Orthodox and
14 Hasidic Jewish community favoring a high
15 level of district services for private
16 school students?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Is there anything wrong with
19 members of the Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish
20 communities running for seats on the school
21 board?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Turn to page 2, at the bottom of
24 the page, paragraph 8, I'm paraphrasing,
25 correct me if I'm wrong, but paragraph 8

1 Fields

2 Q. Did your campaign slate take any
3 official positions on any district services
4 affecting private school students?

5 A. You know, we were concerned
6 about getting the best education for public
7 school students. And that's really what we
8 concentrated on. We wanted the public
9 schools to be as good as they could be. I'd
10 say, as good as they were before. Like, I
11 would say, that every parent wants that.

12 Q. So services for private school
13 students were not a major part of your
14 campaign; is that a fair statement?

15 A. That's a fair statement.

16 Q. Did your campaign take any
17 official position on reducing district
18 services to private school students?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Did your campaign take any
21 official position on maintaining district
22 services to private school students?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Did you in your campaign make
25 any effort to appeal to the parents of

1 Fields

2 private school students to vote for you?

3 A. There were private school
4 parents who reached out to us.

5 Q. Do you remember specifically?

6 A. I don't know who they were. I
7 mean, I don't remember their names. I know
8 it was a group of women from the private
9 school community who met us at the library
10 and their intent was that they wanted to
11 support us and they also wanted their
12 children to be educated.

13 Q. In that context, do you mean by
14 saying "private school community" the
15 Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Did you meet with those women at
18 the library?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Do you recall when about that
21 meeting may have occurred?

22 A. I don't recall. I don't recall,
23 but it has to be within the campaign year,
24 so...

25 Q. Do you recall who was there

1 Fields

2 neighborhoods?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. When you referred to exclusively
5 Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish neighborhoods
6 before, what neighborhoods were those?

7 A. Kaser, some of Monsey and
8 New Square.

9 Q. You didn't campaign in those
10 neighborhoods?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Why not?

13 A. Because I didn't think I would
14 be welcome there.

15 Q. Why didn't you think you would
16 be welcome there?

17 A. Because when my husband and I
18 first moved to Rockland County, we didn't
19 know the county, and we drove into a street
20 in New Square, and we were surrounded by a
21 bunch of men, and we were escorted out.

22 Q. Did the women you met with from
23 the Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities
24 offer to campaign for you in those
25 exclusively Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish

1 Fields

2 Q. Do you believe it's been
3 historically low?

4 A. In the past, yes.

5 Q. Were you successful in your run
6 for the school board?

7 A. No, I was not.

8 Q. Do you think you lost the
9 election because you're Black?

10 A. No. I think I lost the election
11 because someone else got more votes.

12 Q. Do you think that Black
13 residents of East Ramapo have a fair
14 opportunity to run for the school board?

15 A. No, I don't believe that.

16 Q. Why not?

17 A. First of all, I would like an
18 opportunity to voice what my concerns are,
19 and since there's always -- the residents --
20 the minority residents never have an
21 opportunity to get in on the school board,
22 so -- it's always the other side, the other
23 community, and something about that.

24 Q. Well, let's drill down on that a
25 little bit.

1 Fields

2 Do the residents from the
3 minority community, are they not able to get
4 elected to the school board because they're
5 minorities?

6 MR. JASON: Objection.

7 A. I don't think so. I think it's
8 because they don't have enough votes.

9 Q. Why do you think they don't have
10 enough votes?

11 A. Because in the Jewish -- the
12 Orthodox and Hasidic communities, there is
13 something called a "bloc vote," and whatever
14 their interests are, the bloc vote always
15 wins.

16 Q. Does the bloc vote, as you
17 describe it, do they vote for minority
18 candidates?

19 MR. JASON: Objection.

20 A. They vote for people who have
21 their interests at heart, whether they're
22 minority or not.

23 Q. Your understanding is that the
24 Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish communities vote
25 for candidates who align with their

1 Fields

2 interests regardless of their race?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. In your experience in East
5 Ramapo, has there ever been a problem with
6 minority voters being kept away from the
7 polls?

8 A. Not that I know of.

9 Q. Do you know, or, rather, in your
10 experience, have you ever seen candidates
11 for the school board in East Ramapo ever
12 campaign on an issue specifically about
13 race?

14 A. I have not.

15 But I would like to take a
16 break.

17 MR. LEVINE: That's fine.

18 (Recess taken.)

19 Q. In 2016 you ran against an
20 opposing slate, right?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And that opposing slate included
23 a gentleman by the name of Pierre Germain;
24 do you remember that?

25 A. Yes.

1 Fields

2 process that you needed to go through to get
3 on to a certain slate, but just to run for
4 the school board, you don't need to be on a
5 slate, do you?

6 A. You don't need to. You just
7 need to apply. You need to have a certain
8 number of signatures and you need to make a
9 formal application to the board of
10 education.

11 Q. Right.

12 So there is no reason why three
13 people can't go down to the school district
14 and file those papers and run for the school
15 board, right?

16 MR. JASON: Objection.

17 A. With the proper signatures.

18 Q. Right.

19 They don't need a formal slate
20 to do that?

21 MR. JASON: Objection.

22 Q. Do they?

23 A. No, I don't think so.

24 Q. Right.

25 So do you know whether your

1 Fields

2 opponents, Pierre Germain, Bernard Charles
3 and Yehuda Weissmandl, went through any
4 formal slating process?

5 A. No. They probably just got
6 together with the same interests and decided
7 to.

8 Q. Right. I mean, it's possible.

9 MR. LEVINE: Off the record.

10 (Discussion off the record.)

11 Q. Two of your opponents in the
12 2016 election were Black men, right?

13 A. One was.

14 Q. Mr. Charles was a Black man,
15 right?

16 A. He wasn't my opponent.

17 Q. Two members of the opposing
18 slate were Black men, right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And your understanding is that
21 they were supported by the Orthodox and
22 Hasidic Jewish communities, right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Do you think that the race of
25 the candidates in your election was a

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Fields

motivating factor for any of the voters who
voted?

A. No.

MR. LEVINE: I have no further
questions.

MS. MATTHEWS: I don't have any
questions.

MR. JASON: Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

MR. JASON: No questions from
plaintiffs.

(Time noted: 4:09 p.m.)

JEAN E. FIELDS

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this ___ day of _____, 201_.

Notary Public

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C E R T I F I C A T E
STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : ss.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, THERESA TRAMONDO, a Notary
Public within and for the State of New
York, do hereby certify:

That Jean E. Fields, the witness
whose deposition is hereinbefore set
forth, was duly sworn by me and that such
deposition is a true record of the
testimony given by the witness.

I further certify that I am not
related to any of the parties to this
action by blood or marriage, and that I am
in no way interested in the outcome of
this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my hand this 19th day of
February, 2018.



THERESA TRAMONDO

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----- I N D E X -----

WITNESS	EXAMINATION BY	PAGE
J.E. FIELDS	MR. LEVINE	5

----- INFORMATION REQUESTS -----

DIRECTIONS: (NONE)

RULINGS: (NONE)

TO BE FURNISHED: (NONE)

REQUESTS: (NONE)

MOTIONS: (NONE)

CONFIDENTIAL: (NONE)

----- EXHIBITS -----

FIELDS EXHIBIT FOR ID.

Fields Exhibit 1, document titled	10
"Declaration of Jean E. Fields"	
Fields Exhibit 2, letter to	43
Dr. Joel Klein from State	
Education Department dated	
December 14, 2012	

(EXHIBITS RETAINED BY REPORTER.)